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REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-14 are pending in the present application after this amendment cancels claim 2. Claims 1, 3-12, and 14 are amended. No new matter is added. In view of the amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Examiner in clarifying the Office Action in the informal interview occurring on or about March 19, 2007. Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner clarified that claim 2 is considered allowable.

Claim 1 is amended herein to include the features of allowable claim 2, and therefore claim 1, as well as its dependent claims, are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1 and 3-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,594,640 to Postrel et al. (hereinafter Postrel) in view of U.S. Patent 6,078,891 to Riordan (hereinafter Riordan). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Canceled claim 2, the features of which are now included in each of the independent claims, includes a point generating means that performs steps including, *inter alia*, calculating first points when it is judged that the commodities related to the combination are included, said first points being decided based on a specific parameter applied to said combination, or based on the specific parameter applied to said combination and on selling prices of the commodities related to said combination. The Examiner acknowledges that the features of canceled claim 2 are not disclosed in the prior art. Therefore, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Independent claims 7, 9-12, and 14, have been amended to include features similar to those discussed above in regard to canceled claim 2, and therefore each of these claims is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 is allowable.

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Claim 8 depends from claim 7 and claim 13 depends from claims 11 and 12, and therefore these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as their respective base claims are allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian E. Hennessy
Reg. No. 51,271

CUSTOMER NUMBER 026304
Telephone: (212) 940-6331
Fax: (212) 940-8986 or 8987
Docket: 100809-16268 (SCET 18.735)
BEH:fd